



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II TO THE PARISH PRIEST PREFECTS OF THE DIOCESE OF ROME

Saturday, 24 February 1979

Dear Friends,

1. At the end of this brotherly meeting, I feel the deep need to express to you cordially my joy and satisfaction at this meeting of ours: joy, because I find myself once more with a specialized group of priests of my Roman diocese; satisfaction because I have been able to see personally the seriousness and pastoral commitment which animate you all.

In the articulated structure of the diocese, you have the delicate task of acting as liaison between the "Presbyterium" and the Bishop; of ensuring and strengthening also the continual and effective concord of priests in the sphere of the respective Prefectures, in order that the overall Apostolate may be coordinated with the purposes of a more and more homogeneous and prompt effectiveness. The circle of this twofold union is widened and strengthened even more in the Prefects' community meetings, as is that of today, in order to study together, in a wide survey, the pastoral problems of the Church in Rome, as is laid down in the Apostolic Constitution "Vicariae Potestatis in Urbe" (n. 7-8).

In this perspective, the function and the mission of the Prefect and of the Council of Prefects take on great significance for the diocesan apostolate; since they condition its necessary and desirable compactness, as well as its orderly and logical method.

On you, in particular, there falls the responsibility that the diocese of Rome may really be, like the early community of Jerusalem, "of one heart and soul" (Acts 4:32).

2. It is the first time I have officially met the Prefects of the Diocese of Rome, and this happy circumstance brings back to my memory the many meetings with the Prefects of my diocese in

Krakow. At these meetings, over which I presided, I conversed in a brotherly way with my priests and discussed our common responsibilities as pastors and guides of souls. The close collaboration which existed between Bishop and Prefect was a guarantee of serene availability for the solution of the various complex problems which ecclesial life presented day after day.

3. I listened with deep interest to the three reports on the "Lenten Apostolate" in Rome. It intends to move in three directions, with a concrete approach: catechesis; liturgical celebrations; the commitment of charity. I hope and trust that, in such a rich and significant liturgical time as is that of Lent, now imminent, not only the priests of the diocese but all the faithful will be made aware of these three fundamental aspects of Christian life.

I listened with particular attention to the evaluation of this pastoral year's second Assembly of the Roman Clergy which took place on 15 February last. In it you studied the subject of the Clergy of Rome faced with the requirements of the diocese, stressing four points: the requirements of an authentic communion; the structures of participation and collegiality; solidarity and equalization between the Clergy and the parishes; and finally, the problem of vocations.

I was positively impressed by the spirit that animated the Meeting, by the high number of participants, and by the truly priestly commitment with which you tackled such delicate problems. I hope that concrete spiritual fruit will come from it.

I also think that some ideas, which I listened to at this meeting today, will certainly be a precious help for me to prepare the address which I will deliver to the Roman Clergy in the audience that will take place for the beginning of Lent. In this connection, I would be sincerely grateful to you if you would add some other suggestions, either orally or in writing, because, as the book of Proverbs notes: "a wise man listens to advice" (Prov 12:15).

To all of you my esteem and affection. May the faithful of the whole Church, looking to their brothers and priests of the diocese of Rome, subscribe to the words that St Paul addressed to the Romans: "Your faith is proclaimed in all the world" (Rom 1:8).

With this wish, I bless you paternally.

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